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ROE, FREDERIC GORDON

Henry Bright of the Norwich  
School.





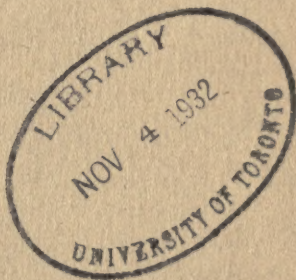
# WALKER'S QUARTERLY

## HENRY BRIGHT

(Born 1810 *circa.* Died 1873)

NORWICH SCHOOL

[by Frederic Gordon Roe]



BY APPOINTMENT

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WALKER'S GALLERIES

118, NEW BOND STREET

LONDON, W. 1

PRICE 2/- NETT.



HENRY BRIGHT



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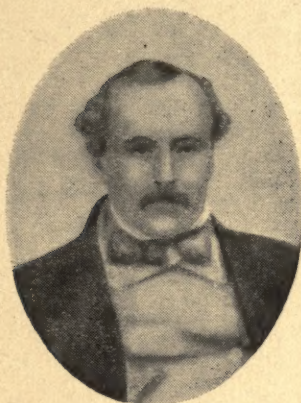
# WALKER'S QUARTERLY

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No. 1

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HENRY BRIGHT

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118, NEW BOND STREET  
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Size 14 × 10½ ins.



## Introductory.



THE comparative obscurity in which the histories of so many excellent artists are still shrouded has inspired me to issue a "Quarterly," which will recount the salient features of their lives, and provide reliable criticisms upon their respective styles. During the course of a many years' proprietorship of Walker's Galleries, in New Bond Street, I have been astonished to find how little known and, consequently, poorly appreciated are the works of numerous "Lesser Masters." This is due partly to the fact that such painters have either been overlooked or else dismissed with non-exhaustive accounts in the most commonly handled books of reference. Frequenters of my galleries will be the first to acknowledge that I have been ever ready to exhibit the works of this class, when their merits seemed to warrant publicity, and, although my regular visitors are usually thoroughly conversant with artistic lore, I venture to hope that these pages may be referred to in cases of doubt concerning the lives of those with whom they are concerned.

"Walker's Quarterly" is not solely designed to deal with deceased artists. In the future I hope to call attention to unrecognised contemporaries, who only require an initial

impetus to place them in their proper sphere. Water-Colour will be favoured chiefly, but engravings—especially aquatints—will receive due attention. This first issue is confined to a painter who, though his death occurred less than 50 years back, is only now assuming his proper and permanent place in British Art. As the following pages will prove, Henry Bright's life was one of honourable distinction in his calling. He had Royalty, his brother brushes, and, if the numerous cuttings I have inspected are any criterion, the Press on his side. He was a highly successful art-master, a member of the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and a familiar exhibitor at the Royal Academy and British Institution. To crown all, he enjoyed the friendship of Turner. Despite all these advantages, the public passed to something fresh, but I am happy in the belief that my own efforts at restoring his laurels are taking effect, and that Henry Bright will be a name to recognise in future text-books.

AUGUSTUS WALKER.







Size  $25\frac{7}{8} \times 18$  ins.

FAST CASTLE





# Henry Bright

## OF THE NORWICH SCHOOL

By F. Gordon Roe.

**T**HE period intervening between Henry Bright's death and the present day has been marked by scattered attempts to recall his claims to remembrance. The 1910 Winter Exhibition at Burlington House, to which was lent the Earl of Wemyss's beautiful "St. Benet's Abbey, Norfolk," is still fresh in mind, as also are the important collections placed on view at Walker's Galleries in 1911 and the present year. These latter afforded practically unique opportunities for the London public to judge Bright, not only by his oils, but also by selected examples of his pastels, water-colours and pencil drawings. A few of the most striking items are reproduced in this brochure.

A discerning writer who, when penning Bright's obituary in *The Art Journal*, observed of the artist's remaining works that "collectors will do well to secure some one, or more of these desirable examples," is now being amply justified in his advice. Although Bright achieved a high popularity during his life, his pictures are now commencing to be held in that more lasting esteem which, based on matured and unbiassed judgment, must inevitably gain him an assured niche with the great masters of the Norwich school.

If Bright was of Norfolk by tuition, he was of Suffolk by birth, his first breath being drawn at Saxmundham in either 1810 or 1814. The baptismal registers of the parish church are silent on the question; no instance of the name occurs in them between 1805 and 1820. This is not to be wondered at, however, as the Brights were Independents. They attended the old chapel at Rendham, three miles from Saxmundham, and owned a vault in its graveyard.\* The early registers of the chapel, now in Somerset House, contain numerous references to the family, but, unfortunately, the most important is undated, simply stating that "Henry Bright, the son of Jerome and Susan Bright, of the parish of Saxmundham, was born." This entry is sandwiched between others of 1811 and 1812 respectively, but the compilation of the register is extremely erratic, and 1810 may have been intended. Jerome Bright had several children, but I did not notice any younger than Henry, whereas some were born so long previous to him as the 1790's. On the other hand, Henry Bright's age at death (1873) was published as 59, and this is supported by the statement of the artist's grandson, Mr. J. H. C. Millar, who has always understood that the birth took place in the year before Waterloo. According to the artist's niece, now approaching her nineties, Henry Bright's father was "a high-class Jeweller and Lapidary at Saxmundham." A more general reference to his antecedents appears in Add. M.S. 19120 (Davy's Suffolk Collections, Vol. XLIV.):—"He was, I believe, of

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\*The Bright vault at Rendham is so deeply embedded in ivy as to render any inscriptions illegible. The Congregational Minister, the Rev. Alfred J. Basden, has very courteously provided me with extracts from the registers recording the following burials:—Ellen Maria, infant daughter of Denny Bright, of Saxmundham, 3rd April, 1839; Miss Jane Bright, 1846; "Mr. Bright," 1846; "Mrs. Bright, of Saxmundham," 22nd January, 1847; Jerome Denny Bright, of Saxmundham, 21st April, 1871 (son of Jerome and Susan, born 9th March, 1793, died 14th April, 1871, in 79th year); "Jane Bright was interred in the family vault, 12th July, 1876."







Size 16½ × 10 ins.

THE WHITE CLOUD ON THE HILL



Saxmundham formerly, where the family has been long established as tradesmen."

Bright's early years did not lack romance. An early inclination towards an artistic profession received small encouragement from his father, who apprenticed him to a Woodbridge chemist. Thence the lad went to Norwich, where, after entering Paul Squire's shop, he became a dispenser at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The change of locale proved auspicious, since it brought him in contact with the painters of the Norwich School, and it was not long before his inherent talent was perceived and fostered. The mentors of his novitiate were "Young" Crome and John Sell Cotman, to whom—and especially to the latter—Bright owed the development of that breadth of conception and directness of treatment which ripened into being his most prominent qualities. That he had always possessed them to a large degree can hardly be doubted. There are in existence numbers of sketches by him bearing all the impress of magnificent draughtsmanship. Even when one has glanced at their dates, it is difficult to believe that some of them were produced by a youth barely twenty years of age. Mr. Walker has more than one such early masterpiece in his varied collection.

The country in the midst of which Bright was living played a part in influencing his æsthetic appreciation of the picturesque. Crumbling abbey ruins, tottering gabled houses, crazy derelict mills, all served as points of interest in the atmospheric landscapes he loved to draw. A less ambitious spirit might have rested content among such sympathetic surroundings, but Bright was made of sterner stuff. Art's luring lantern hovered constantly before him, and, in the end, his footsteps followed it to London.

Bright's public career commenced in 1836, when his début at the British Institution laid the first foundation of success. He was then settled at 12, Spring Terrace,

Paddington Green, whence his work was "sent in" for some years. Having established headquarters in the metropolis, he courted inspiration by tours not only in England, Scotland and Wales, but also on the continent. In the course of one of these trips he struck up a friendship with J. M. W. Turner. Mr. Millar thinks that Bright travelled in Turner's company on certainly two, and possibly more of these sketching excursions. He recounts a story which enables one to visualise a characteristic incident of the great academician routing the Norwich man, grumbling, from a warm bed in order to see the sunrise from some Swiss peak. Ruskin, Turner's prophet, more than once expressed his esteem of Bright's work. A pencil sketch by Bright of "A Cottage in Arran," in Mr. Millar's possession, was so much admired by the author of "Modern Painters," that it is known to the family as "The Ruskin Cottage."

I am tempted to dwell on Mr. Millar's reminiscences, since although but of tender years when his grandfather passed away, he has inherited a fund of anecdote from his mother who, in addition to being Bright's eldest daughter, was his constant companion. Her mother dying when she was about nine years old, Mrs. Millar was thrown into the closest contact with her bereaved parent. Until her marriage, she accompanied him on several sketching excursions, meeting many noted artists by the way. Bright's list of acquaintance was varied, including Samuel Prout, David Cox, George Lance, Collingwood Smith, Leitch, Henry Jutsum (a very great friend), and J. D. Harding, who eventually handed over to him a class of pupils which Bright augmented until it boasted scores of members, nearly all belonging to titled houses. This section of his profession is estimated to have meant as much as £2,000 per annum to Bright at one portion of his career. An offshoot of the same branch is observable in the instructional copies which he issued. "Bright's advanced







Size 12½ × 8½ ins.



Size  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  ins

RUINED CASTLE





Drawing Book, adapted for the Pencilling Tints," 15" × 11", six numbers (2/- each), and "Bright's Graduated Tint Studies," 15" × 11", 24 plates (1/- each), were examples published by Messrs. George Rowney & Co.

In 1839, Bright was elected to the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours (now the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours). The following was a "bumper" year as regards exhibited works, no fewer than 15 scenes, many of them records of his continental travels, going to the New Society alone. The impulse proved its own numerical exhaustion, and was never repeated on a similar scale. It is probable, however, that Bright had decided to conserve his energies towards the mastery of oil-technique, but it was not until 1843 that he gained the verdict of the Royal Academy authorities. In 1843, he was residing at 12, Park Place Terrace, Paddington, this being the year before he resigned his membership of the New Society. Park Place Terrace did not keep him long, since the 1845 catalogues locate him at Dudley Villa, Paddington Green. This year Bright received the ever-signal compliment of being bought by a brother brush, his "On the River Yare" being chosen by Clarkson Stanfield, with whom he cherished a friendship ever after. This was not the first important recognition received by Bright. Queen Victoria had purchased his "Entrance to an old Prussian Town," in the New Society's show of 1844, and is also said to have collected other examples of his art.

Between 1848 and 1849, Bright removed to Grove Cottage, Ealing. During the period so far covered one can picture the artist setting out on sketching tours or staying at Brodrick Castle, where he once carried the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia on his back across a swollen stream. The Grand Duchess was one of his patrons; she gave him several commissions, particulars of which are extant in one of his sketch books, but

unfortunately the execution of some of these was delayed by the Crimean War.

The remaining years of the artist's life present difficulties to the biographer. His track becomes overlaid by that of another H. Bright, possessing no nearer connection than a coincidental similarity of name. In 1875 and 1876 this secondary Bright was to be found at Long Ditton; between then and the 'eighties the name reappears at Thames Ditton.

The subject of this memoir was certainly living at Ealing in 1850. Mr. Dickes (in "The Norwich School of Painting") keeps him there until 1869, when the Windham Club was cited as the place to which enquiries might be directed. In this case, the two pictures hung at the Society of British Artists in 1867 and 1868 may have been by his namesake. It has been asserted in the above-mentioned book that it was the Norwich man who went to live at Vine Cottage, Kennington Oval (in 1870-1). "The Annual Register" (1873) assures us that Bright "retired about five years ago, incapacitated by illness, to Ipswich," where he died on September 21st, 1873.

It must remain to be noted that a Henry Barnabas Bright, of Vine Cottage, Kennington Oval, deceased three years later.

Although "the brilliant genius, Bright"—as Major Haldane Macfall unhesitatingly styles him in the eighth volume of his "History of Painting"—has been dubbed the "last of the Norwich School," and certainly ranks with the last great artists produced in that brilliant procession, he was survived actually by several members of the body. His capabilities brought him into collaboration with many contemporaries. Amongst these must be included his companion, Thomas Lound, in an "Ely Cathedral, Sunset"; J. J. Hill in "The Cabin Door"; Armfield in "The Dying Stag, Glencoe";

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\* "The Norwich School of Painting," by W. F. Dickes.



Size  $13\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  ins.





J. F. Herring in "Cattle Drovers and Deer Stalkers Meeting"; T. Faed in a "View in the Tyrol"; H. B. Willis in a "Landscape with Cattle"; and Herring and Baxter in "Cavaliers with Horse and Ladies."

It will be conceded that Bright's claim to recognition is based, not on these, but on his more personal work. An adept with the brush, he produced some superb landscapes in oils, dignified by sympathetic observation, by direct handling and by sweet coloration. His pastels and water-colours, by which he is best known at Walker's Galleries, seldom failed either in tenderness or harmony. Their constituents were peculiarly adapted to the technical capabilities of a man with a swift perception of changing chords in the chromatic scale of nature, which he noted down with an assured facility surpassing comment. He was emphatically a stupendous draughtsman, and it is amazing to note how level was the balance of his mind between drawing and colour. In considering his drawings, count must be taken of the sketches in pencil and charcoal which he turned out so lavishly. Bright roamed the earth with an avid eye for quaint cottage corners, picturesque tree forms or glimpses of wild moorland scenery. These random jottings form important witnesses to his dexterity; they contain no line without its meaning, no tentative fumbings after effects. There were few men better qualified than he to belong to a body with a title like the Graphic Society, of which he was at one time a member. It is not within the province of this "Quarterly" to act as a Catalogue Raisonné, else I should have dwelt upon such masterpieces as the beautiful "Shrimper" pastel in the British Museum, or the "Effect after Rain" oil at Norwich. In lieu, I give a list of the works which he exhibited at London galleries, supplemented by some references to those which are doubtful or which seem likely to have emanated from another hand.

The compilation of even so short a memoir has been attended by considerable labour, lightened by the kindnesses of many art lovers. I must acknowledge special gratitude to Mr. Augustus Walker for his unremitting aid and the opportunities he has provided for me to make close examinations of the "Brights" in his galleries. Mr. J. H. C. Millar, in addition to valuable information, provided the photograph of Bright reproduced in this brochure. Other relatives of the artist who have come forward with assistance are Mr. Alexander Denny (nephew), Mr. George Bright Ashford (a great nephew), and Mr. Denny Bright. The Rev. Frederick Conway, Rector of Saxmundham, has been most courteous in the matter of registers, whilst Mr. Sam Dale, of the same place, the Rev. Arthur Platts, the Rev. A. J. Basden, Mr. Leonard Calvert, Mr. Frank Leney (Curator of the Norwich Castle Museum), Messrs. Geo. Rowney & Co., Mr. Henry Ogle, F.L.A. (Librarian of the Ipswich Central Library), Mr. R. A. Coates, Mr. John Booth, late of the "East Anglian Daily Times," and many more have given help in various matters. The printed works which have been consulted are too numerous to specify in extenso, but "The Norwich School of Painting" by W. F. Dickes (Jarrold & Sons), and Mr. Algernon Graves's monumental series of reference books have my homage.





Size  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins.



# Works Exhibited in London by Henry Bright, of the Norwich School.

[The arrangement of works in each year is dictated solely by convenience, and bears no necessary relation to their comparative importance. Certain seeming discrepancies may be traced back to the original catalogues.]

1836	Heath Scene—Stormy Weather.	(British Institution)	
1838	Waterfall near Dolgelly, called the Black Cataract, 2' 1" × 1' 9".	Do.	
	Old Cottages near Petworth, 1' 8" × 2' 1".	Do.	
	Winter, 1' 6" × 1' 10".	Do.	
1839	Coast Scene, 1' 4" × 1' 11".	Do.	
	Evening (Drawing) (New Society of Painters in Water-Colours)	Do.	
	Scene near St. Donat's Castle, South Wales. (Drawing)	Do.	
	Winter.	Do.	Do.
	Coast Scene.	Do.	Do.
	Coast Scene.	Do.	Do.
1840	Scene on the Banks of the Rhine near Nieder Wesel.	Do.	Do.
	Lake Scene, Trowse, near Norwich.	Do.	Do.
	Scene on the Rhine—Evening.	Do.	Do.
	On the River near Leyden, Holland—Moonrise.	Do.	Do.
	On the River Ore, Suffolk.	Do.	Do.
	Conway Castle.	Do.	Do.
	Winter Scene near Leyden, Holland—Dutch People returning from Market in a Sledge.	Do.	Do.
	Scene on the French Coast—Hazy Morning.	Do.	Do.
	Landscape, Holland—Early Morning.	Do.	Do.
	Unloading a Wreck on the Sands near Orford Lights, coast of Suffolk.	Do.	Do.
	Dutch Boats, on the River near Rotterdam.	Do.	Do.
	In Shrubland Park, Suffolk.	Do.	Do.
	On the Coast of France—Sunrise.	Do.	Do.
	Rocky Shore, Pembrokeshire, S. Wales.	Do.	Do.
	On the Suffolk Coast—Sunset.	Do.	Do.
	Scene in the Woodlands of Suffolk, 1' 7" × 2' 2". (British Institution)		
	Ruins of a Mill on the Heath, Sizewell-by-the- Sea, Suffolk, 2' 6" × 3' 5".	Do.	
1841	Evening, 11" × 1' 3".	Do.	
	Ruin of an Old Mill, on the Marshes near Loddon, Norfolk—Early Morning. (Drawing) (N.S.P.W.-C.)		
	Old Mill, Clovelly, North Devon.	Do.	Do.
	Sketch of a Devonshire Cottage.	Do.	Do.
	Waterfall, Devonshire.	Do.	Do.
1842	On Holt Heath, Norfolk.	Do.	Do.
	Coast Scene, 1' 1" × 1' 6".	(British Institution)	
	Landscape and Cattle, 1' 1" × 1' 6".	Do.	



1843	Sketch on the Rhine—Moonlight. River Lynn, Devon. Scene in North Devon. River Lynn, Devon. On the Thames. Moonrise. River Scene—Sunrise.	(Royal Academy) (Drawing) (N.S.P.W.-C.) Do. Do. Do. Do. Do. Do. Do. Do.
1844	Entrance to an Old Prussian Town—Winter Evening Effect (Purchased by H.M. Queen Victoria). Scene on the Borders of Dartmoor, Devon. A Dutch Village—Twilight, Moonrise, 2' 2" × 2' 11". A Landscape, Cornwall—Autumnal Morning, 2' 2" × 2' 11". On the River Lydd, 1' 3" × 1' 8". Rocky Coast, Polperro, 1' 5" × 1' 11". Bilston Tor, Dartmouth, 1' 5" × 1' 11". On the River Bure—Moonlight, 1' 4" × 1' 8". Near Newport, Isle of Wight, 1' 7" × 2' 6".	Do. Do. Do. Do. (British Institution) Do. Do. Do. Do. Do. Do.
1845	A Cornish Mountain Scene, 3' 8" × 5' 8". On the River Yare, Norfolk (Purchased by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.).	Do. (Royal Academy)
1846	Scene in Holland—Afternoon Effect. Scene on the Yorkshire Moors—Early Morning, 3' 2" × 4' 1". The Vale of the Wharfe, Bolton, 2' 4" × 3' 4". Near Pulham St. Mary the Virgin, Norfolk, 1' 10" × 2' 5". A Welsh Mountain Stream, 1' 10" × 2' 5".	Do. (British Institution) Do. Do. Do.
1847	Evening, 1' 7" × 2' 0". Welsh Mountain Scene—Autumnal Cloudy Weather, 4' 6" × 6' 6". An Old Water Mill at Ifley, Oxon, 3' 1" × 4' 10". Ruined Castle on the Banks of the Rhine— Sunset Effect. Remains of St. Benedict's Abbey on the Norfolk Marshes—Thunderstorm clearing off.	Do. Do. Do. (Royal Academy) Do.
1848	An Overlook, near the Southern Coast of England. A "Bit" from a sketch near Bolton, 1' 7" × 2' 0".	Do. (British Institution)
1849	The Old Hall at Stiffkey, near Wells, Norfolk. Once the seat of Sir Nicholas Bacon.	(Royal Academy)
1850	A Mountain Stream, Borrowdale, Cumberland. On the River Yare, Norfolk.	Do. Do.
1869	The Ray after the Storm.	Do.



Size 11 $\frac{1}{4}$   $\times$  7 $\frac{1}{4}$  ins.





By H. Bright, 26, Moore Park Road, Fulham.

1867 Sunset on the Thames.

(Society of British Artists)

By H. Bright, 22, Victoria Grove, Queen's Gate,  
South Kensington.

1868 An Evening Flight.

(Society of British Artists)

By H. Bright (no address given).

1870 (Winter) A Pipe and a Chat.

(Society of British Artists)

By H. Bright, 16, Bear Street, Leicester Square.

1870 "Won't you tell me why, Robin?" (Society of British Artists)

1871 Cochin China.

Do.

By H. Bright, Vine Cottage, Kennington Oval.

1871 "There by the banks and in armour bright," etc. (Royal Academy)

1873 "Returning victors from the field of fight,

Our gallant frogs present a gala sight."

(Society of British Artists)

Maggie's Secret.

Do.

1874 "Where can my little brother be?"

Do.

By H. Bright, of Rodrick Lodge, Long Ditton.

1875/6 "The Favourite of the Season." (Society of British Artists)

1876 "Friends in Adversity."

(Royal Academy)

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*Note.*—One of the most important Chromolithographs issued after Henry Bright's work was that entitled "A View in North Wales," announced by Messrs. George Rowney & Co. in 1858.

A woodcut portrait of the artist will be found in the Print Room of the British Museum.

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**Bright, Henry**

Author [Roe, Frederick Gordon]

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Art.B

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